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STATE PARK

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THE PARK

Beaver Dam State Park, in Macoupin County about halfway between Springfield and St. Louis, is 7 miles south of Carlinville on a country road. The 737-acre park, including the lake, offers the visitor a variety of recreational facilities.

Although the beaver is virtually gone from this area, Beaver Dam State Park is named after the beavers who originally made the lake.

THE LAKE

Beaver Dam lake is the main attraction of the park. The 59-acre lake has a maximum depth of 10 feet with 1.7 miles of shoreline. Over the years, the lake has been stocked with game fish, including largemouth bass, bluegill, sunfish and channel catfish. In order to assure desirable population, fish management practices such as the control of submerged vegetation and water draw-downs are used to reduce the number of small panfish.

The wooded land surrounding the lake contains oaks, elms, hickories and other native trees. No one knows how long the lake has been here. Local residents claim it is at least a century old, possibly dating back to the time of the Indians.

HISTORY

The lake became well known as a fishing spot in the early 1890's and 18 men from Carlinville formed the Beaver Dam Lake Club. They spent about \$2,500 to build a dam at each end of the lake and doubled the depth of the water.

For a number of years the club held a summer and fall picnic at the lake and their families and friends enjoyed fishing and boating throughout the season. The area then became the property of the family of Mrs. Sarah Rhodes who, for some time, operated a small hotel which stood on the site of the present ranger's residence.

Up the road, half a mile from this site, is Macoupin Station. At one time it had been a cluster of houses and a railroad station. Trains stopping here were met by a large horse-drawn coach which took guests to the hotel. With the advent of the automobile, however, this transit business disappeared and the hotel was closed.

Becomes a State Park: The initial land acquisition for Beaver Dam State Park was 425 acres in 1947. After being developed by the Division of Fisheries, the park was transferred to the Division of Parks and Memorials in 1955. Additional land purchases have increased the total acreage to 737 acres.

THE BEAVER

Beaver Dam lake is unique in that it has two dams and lies on a ridge which formerly divided the flow of the springs between the watershed contributory to Macoupin and Hurricane creeks. The springs now feed the lake. Owing to some phenomenon of nature, a saddle which formed good banks for two sides of the lake had been formed in the ridge. A colony of beaver, taking advantage of the help afforded by nature, constructed a dam across Macoupin Creek to the

west of the ridge and created a lake ideally suited to their use.

The beaver dam, such as originally created this lake, is a complicated structure of sticks, stones, roots, mud and sod. Sometimes these dams are as large as 500 feet in length. Man has copied the beaver's dam with concrete, stone and steel, as can be observed at Beaver Dam State Park.

Indians and pioneers found the beaver excellent eating, but the trade in their skins is what brought the white man into the state. The French had particular talents in dealing with the Indians who welcomed the opportunity to trade beaver skins for guns and other articles of another culture. However, the pressure of civilization and the beaver hat out of style ended much of the trade.

After 1912 no beavers were reported in Illinois. They were reintroduced in 1929 and today are found statewide.



FACILITIES

Picnicking: Tables and stoves are in shaded areas scattered around the lake. Bring your own firewood. Playground equipment is available in the main picnic area.

Concession Stand: Near the boat docks, the concession stand provides many picnic and boating needs.

Fishing and Boating: The lake is stocked with largemouth bass, bluegill, sunfish and channel catfish. A boat launch and docks for private or rental boats are available. No gas motors are allowed; electric trolling only.

Camping: There is an area for tents, one for trailers with a limited amount of electricity available and another area for youth groups. A sanitary station is provided for trailers. All campers must secure a camping permit from the park ranger.

Trails: Several developed trails wind throughout the woods and one surrounds the lake on the bank. The hiker has the opportunity to see a variety of wildlife, including white and grey squirrels, red-headed woodpeckers, cardinals, orioles and goldfinches.

Winter Sports: When the weather gets cold enough and the lake is frozen, ice fishing and ice-skating are permitted.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION.

Admittance will not be granted groups of 25 or more persons to any state park or conservation area unless permission from the park ranger has been secured to use the facilities. It is also required that groups of minors have adequate supervision and that at least one responsible adult accompany each group not exceeding 15 minors. All pets must be on a leash.

Numerous State Parks and memorials are within easy access of every part of the state. Lodges, cabins and dining rooms are important features of Illinois Beach, Starved Rock, Pere Marquette, White Pines Forest and Giant City. Reservations for lodging should be made with lodge managers.

All state parks are open the year round. When weather conditions necessitate the closing of park roads during freezing and thawing periods, access to park facilities is by foot only.

For further information concerning Illinois State Parks and Memorials write to the Department of Conservation, Division of Education, State Office Building, Springfield, 62706.

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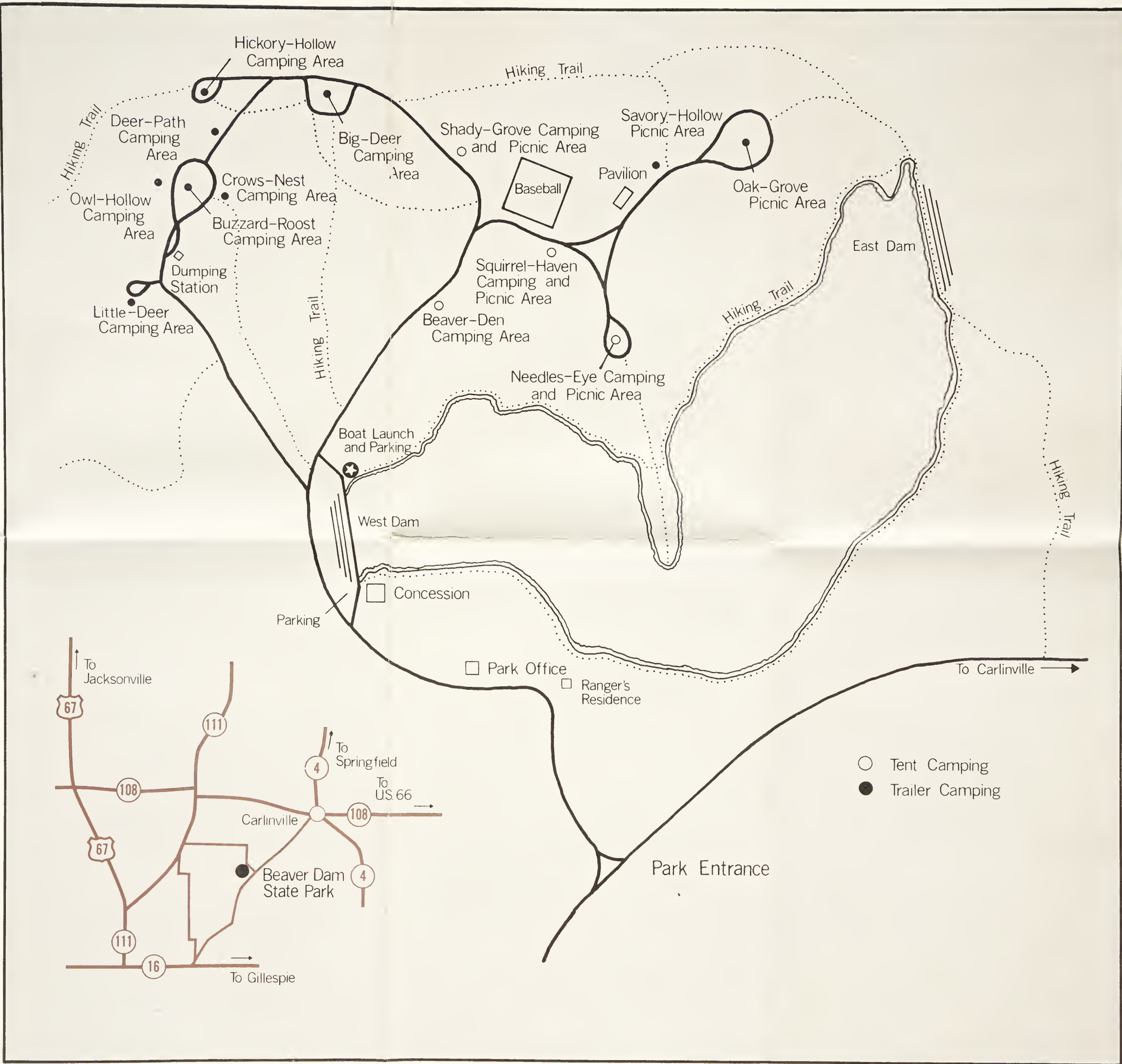
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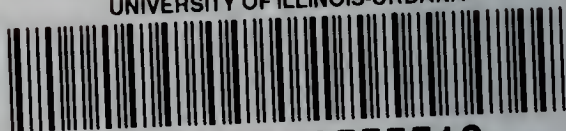
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